



Catching Up with Suzanne Giesemann

by Michael Tymn

When a business client heard about Suzanne Giesemann's first book, *The Priest and the Medium*, he was taken aback and asked somewhat cynically if she was really into that "stuff." She responded that she surely is. "If he'd asked me the same question a couple of weeks earlier, I might have waffled," Suzanne told me in a November 2010 interview, explaining that she was concerned that some people might think she had lost a few marbles since her retirement from the Navy seven years earlier.

Now, a decade or so and seven metaphysical books later, she's still very much *into it*. In fact, she is one of the most sought-after speakers on the spirituality and consciousness conference circuit, not just as an author but as a highly regarded medium. "My life has become an ongoing exploration of a greater reality," she states in the Preface of her latest book, *Still Right Here: A True Story of Healing and Hope*, going on to explain that it all started with the 2006 death of her stepdaughter, Susan, who was struck by lightning. It was Susan's passing that led to her search for the truth of life after death, meeting Anne Gehman, the medium in that first book, and ultimately to the discovery of her mediumistic abilities.

Before that, Suzanne had a pretty "straight-laced" background, serving 20 years in the U.S. Navy, including as a commanding officer, a special assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations, and aide to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Along the way, Commander Giesemann earned a master's degree in National Security Affairs, taught political science at the Naval Academy, and traveled to 56 countries. Her husband, Ty, is a retired U. S. Navy captain.

She began developing as a medium after meeting Gehman and several other mediums who provided evidence of Susan's survival. That prompted her to take several classes in mediumship and an intensive course on the subject at Arthur Findlay College in England. It was while meditating on her sailboat one day in 2009 that she felt the need to pick

up a notebook and start writing. Words started flowing without her thinking. "They came so quickly that I didn't have time to think," she further explained in that 2010 interview. "I just kept writing and realized, 'They've sent me a poet!'" She filled page after page without opening her eyes. She could tell it made sense, but she had no sense of the content as a whole, and she was certain the words hadn't come from her conscious mind.

A year or so later, while in an altered state, Suzanne began bringing through messages from an entity named Sanaya, who identified "themselves" as a collective consciousness of minds with both feminine and masculine energy from a higher dimension than our own. Sanaya has delivered thousands of messages to date (see <https://www.suzannnegiesemann.com/>).

While Sanaya has continued to provide wisdom, Suzanne has continued to lecture and provide both evidence and higher truths in her books, at conferences, and in both individual and group meetings. I recently had the opportunity to exchange email with her and asked her to further explain what her mediumship is all about and to otherwise bring us up to date.

Suzanne, I think "channeling" is something of a "New Age" word, one we don't find in the earlier books on mediumship. Is that what you are doing, or is your trance mediumship something different?

I choose to use the word "channeling" because it is not trance in the sense that the British Spiritualists speak of, in which the medium is in such a deep altered state that spirits come through and provide evidential information that is 100 percent accurate about deceased people. When I channel my guides, they share their perspective on philosophical and spiritual topics with a higher vibration that is palpable. The way they answer questions from audience members with such fluency, ease, and wisdom leaves no doubt that the words are coming from a source beyond my own consciousness.



Suzanne Giesemann



Reflecting Light

Rick Darby

In a Dark Wood

One January day in the first decade of the 20th century, Arthur Christopher Benson — an essayist, biographer, fiction writer, and Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge — suffered an accident that endangered his life. In the months following, while slowly recovering in a house in Sussex owned by his sister and brother-in-law, he was advised by his physician to avoid all physical strain. Not till June was he able to resume writing in his diary. Owing to the house's situation in a "very quiet" village and the frequent absence of his relatives, Benson had immense time for reflection. Being of philosophical disposition, his mind ranged over his past, present, and future and the human condition.

The diary, published as *The Gate of Death* (1909), is remarkable for its probing into the questions occasioned by closeness to death, as well as its finely tuned and un-self-consciously poetic style. *The Gate of Death* is still in print and obtainable through Amazon.com, or online via the invaluable HathiTrust. It deserves a far wider readership than it has today.

Few people in Benson's time (1862–1925), and fewer still in ours, could use such a large portion of quiet and lack of outside stimulation so meaningfully. If our electrical power goes out in a storm, even with emergency lighting and plenty of food and water available, we start going mental after a day or two. But Benson drew on a rich and sensitive inner life, unencumbered by distractions.

His tone — elegant, clear, unpretentious — serves for pondering, not message giving. The diary, he says, "is nothing but the record of the sincere and faltering thoughts of one who was suddenly and unexpectedly confronted with death. ... Such value as these pages may possess will be due to the fact that the writer has tried, as simply and sincerely as he can, to look his experiences steadily in the face,

not to disguise his bewilderment, his suffering, and his fear; and, at the same time, not to attempt to explain away, in a faithless and despondent spirit, the hopes, the instincts, the consolations, that went with him to the brink of the dark stream."

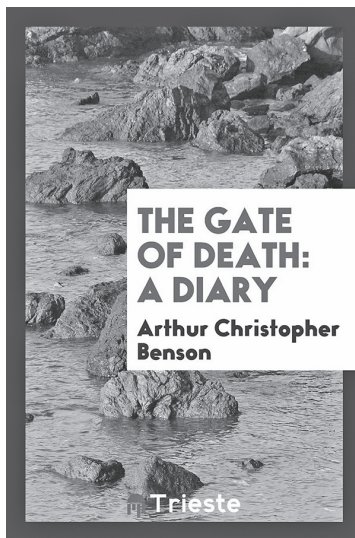
Like Dante, in the middle of life's journey Benson finds himself in a dark wood. Day after day, his mind toggles between present incapacity and the past, between life and death.

He says, "What really appals the mind, what came upon me with a force that I had never contemplated, was the terrible loneliness and isolation of it all. Here, in this world, one can always resort, however much alone one is, to familiar books and thoughts; one can turn to nature; one can call another human being to one's assistance; but the thought came home to me in those hours how little fit one is for loneliness, and how little of one's thought is given to anything but the well-known material surroundings of the world in which we move. From dawn to night one lives in these customary things, one is wholly occupied in them; even at night one trafficks in dreams with the same wares, re-arranging memory and reminiscence to suit one's fantastic taste."

Though he describes himself as a Christian, Benson struggles — existentially, not intellectually — with the problems that have perennially troubled religious thinkers. He recalls examples of life's injustices he has personally witnessed, and how (despite standard inspirational assurances) much of humankind's suffering does not seem to build character or benefit the soul.

The diary relates in affecting terms the long dialogue with his self that eventually brings him, not to unquestioning faith or rest but to a hard-won relationship with God:

"I had neither fear nor regret. As for the countless failures and sins of my life, my frail desires, my timid hopes, my mean passions, they were all in His heart; I had no need to think of them, to confess them, to repent of them; they were God's concern, and mine no longer. ... I felt that it mattered nothing to God what I knew, what I believed, what abstract propositions I had mastered, what my place, my influence, might be; all that mattered was that I should turn to Him at every moment with perfect confidence and trust."



President's Message: Toward a Higher Level of Human Consciousness

The ASCSI is an older scholarly organization than its present name might suggest, having gone through two name changes in the recent past that reflect cultural changes and changing scientific attitudes in America and the world. The original ARPR (Academy of Religion and Psychical Research) was founded in 1972 as the educational and research branch of the SFFI (Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship International), which was founded in 1956 and based upon the philosophy of spiritualist medium Arthur Ford. A little more than a decade ago, the ARPR changed its name to the ASPSI (Academy of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies, Inc.) to reflect a diminishing popularity of religion and psychic phenomena in favor of the more comprehensive words spirituality and paranormal. We changed the name again several years ago, to reflect further changes in science and culture and recent historical trends regarding matters spiritual and the consciousness aspects of our world. Each of these comes more rapidly as we approach a single point of increased consciousness for the human species collectively, not just individuals.



The historical trend toward greater spirituality in our society accompanied by a higher level of human consciousness, not only within science and culture, but within the human species itself (think evolution), is an inescapable reality that is presently affecting everyone. Across the whole spectrum of scholarly and academic studies, covering all fields of human endeavor and learning, from the scientific to the athletic, interest in the rising levels of consciousness are influencing how we think and act, what we think and what we think we actually are, what we consider important in our lives and what we study and want to learn more about.

The new science of psychology that emerged in the last scientific revolution (1900-1927) lost its mind in 1913 when everyone decided to concentrate all their research efforts and studies on behavior and ignore direct references to either mind or consciousness, which they concluded were ultimately unknowable. The science of physics, which is dedicated to the question of what constitutes our material/physical reality and what are the universal principles and rules by which nature operates, also decided, as did all of science, that the ultimate reality of our world was impossible to directly experience as was consciousness. So, all of science lost consciousness after 1913. That left only our sensations of reality alone, not the direct observation of nature, upon

which to develop the theories and our knowledge of the 'laws' of nature as interpreted in our minds and consciousness, so science was thought to only deal with our true reality only indirectly which, in turn, was reflected in the theories and physical laws discovered by science. Then, in reaction to this misguided conclusion, the quantum theory was developed which wrongly indicated that our reality was ultimately indeterministic.

These scientific views trickled down into our social and cultural systems and became part of everyone's overall worldview in the following years and decades. By the 1960s, these views held sway over all aspects of our lives, but things began to change in the 1970s, as if we were beginning to wake up to new realities. And then, by the 1990s, science's overall reductionistic non-subjective view of reality and our opinions on the ultimate nature of both reality and consciousness began to change. We finally began to wake up and regain more and more of our consciousness over the ensuing years, which is a good thing for the future of the Academy if we can use this and take advantage of it. Now that science (and especially physics) has begun to seriously study consciousness to understand it, how it interacts with mind and brain and how it directly influences the universe as a fundamental component of our physical reality.

This new attitude, that consciousness has scientific value as a 'thing-in-itself', strongly implies that consciousness can and does survive death of the material body and brain. Science cannot and should not try to define the human soul, that is a purely religious matter based on personal faith and spirituality, but science can legitimately state with conviction that whatever the soul or afterlife spirit is, it is or 'at least' contains a person's consciousness. Consciousness clearly survives death and determines the quality, form and structure of our afterlife, an idea which corresponds quite well to current spiritual and worldwide religious beliefs.

Studies of the paranormal and afterlife have now combined and morphed into the overall study of consciousness, while science is close to verifying both the paranormal and survival of consciousness and thus the afterlife. This puts the Academy in a unique position to grow and expand in accordance with recent historical trends. The Academy is unique among the many organizations like ours in its overall wider ranging perspective of consciousness, so we are now working toward forging new partnerships with other organizations as we seek to better serve our membership so that we can all experience a better and more productive afterlife.

— James E. Beichler, Ph.D.



Searchlight Media Watch

Tom and Lisa Butler, NST

Being Open Minded: Experiments in personality psychology show that open-minded people process information in different ways and may literally see the world differently from the average person. They engage with the various percepts, patterns, and perspectives that clamor for space in our minds. They people show superior performance on tests of creativity called “divergent thinking tasks.” These require individuals to generate multiple, diverse solutions to a simple problem, such as “how many uses can you think of for a brick?” Less-open people typically generate fewer and more obvious answers to this question — building walls, building houses, building other stuff. But for highly-open people, the possibilities flood in. A brick can be used as a weapon; a paperweight; a replacement leg for a broken sofa; or it can be smashed up and mixed with water to make paint. Open people see more possibilities in even the most mundane of objects.



From: Smillie, Luke. “Openness to Experience: The Gates of the Mind.” *Scientific American*. 2017. scientificamerican.com/article/openness-to-experience-the-gates-of-the-mind/.

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Belief in Life After Death Higher in Younger Generation: A research team from San Diego State University, Florida Atlantic University and Case Western Reserve University took data from the General Social Survey — where 58,000 people are interviewed every year about various things, including religion — and published the results of the survey in *Sage Journals*. The respondents were asked questions such as “What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?” and “Do you believe in life after death?” While the survey showed that fewer people reported that they identified with a particular religion four out of five 18 to 29-year olds did believed in some sort of afterlife. This was seven percent higher than surveys taken in the 70s and interestingly those in younger generations were more likely to believe there is life after death than older ones.

From: Fox, Maggie. “Fewer Americans Believe in God — Yet They Still Believe in Afterlife.” *NBC News*. 2016. nbcnews.com/better/wellness/fewer-americans-believe-god-yet-they-still-believe-afterlife-n542966

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Breakthrough for Suicidal Children: Fourteen-year-old Nicole (named changed for privacy) has told her mother that she wanted to end her life every day for several years. She says that she prays every night that she won’t wake up. After countless psychiatrists, psychotherapists and drugs had shown no improvement in Nicole’s depression her mother converted a cabinet into a safe and locked all pills and everything sharp in it.

Today the 17-year-old hasn’t missed a day of school and is preparing for college. For the first time in years she is happy and wants to live. What caused this dramatic change. Nicole is taking infusions of a psychedelic drug called ketamine. Though she failed to respond to over six medication trials, ketamine cleared her depression within hours. The effect lasts about two weeks before she needs a new infusion.



Ketamine is a drug with many identities. For anesthesiologists, it’s a sedative for painful procedures. For critics, it’s a dangerous addictive drug that can cause memory problems, bladder disease, and psychosis when abused. In the past few years, it has taken on a new identity: miracle psychiatric drug that works within hours. Its use as a psychiatric medication is relatively new, and it’s possible that regular infusions could cause significant long-term side effects. We currently lack the long-term data to know. Still, the National Institute of Mental Health has called it “the most important breakthrough in antidepressant treatment in decades.”

From: Turban, Jack. “The Ketamine Breakthrough for Suicidal Children.” *Scientific American*. 2017. scientificamerican.com/article/the-ketamine-breakthrough-for-suicidal-children/.

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NDE Positively Changes People: We’ve all heard tales of bright lights at the end of a tunnel, or visions of dead loved ones. It might sound like something from a fantasy film, but it turns out to be a common experience. And thanks to growing rates of successful resuscitation, we’re hearing about more of these experiences. In fact, a quarter of patients who’ve had a cardiac arrest report having a near-death experience. Dr. Natasha Tassell-Matamua at Massey University has been researching

the phenomenon, and says near-death experiences positively change people. "Some of those benefits can include that they feel a lot more compassionate towards others, they feel more tolerant of others and situations, they tend to report greater concerns with environmental issues." She says the main effect she's seen in research is the sense of love and compassion survivors get for other human beings, and it's not restricted to people close to them.

From: Hutching, Matthew. "Near-death experiences may make you a better person – study." News Hub. 2017. newshub.co.nz/home/health/2017/03/near-death-experiences-may-make-you-a-better-person-study.html

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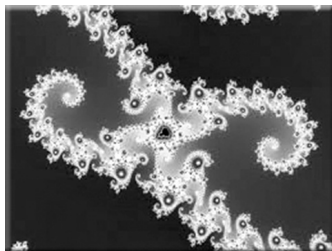
Fear of Death: In a series of studies led by researchers at Britain's University of Oxford, very religious people were among the groups found to be the least fearful of death. What was less anticipated, though, is that they were joined in that distinction by those who believe in no religion: atheists. The paper, which was published in the *Journal Religion, Brain and Behavior*, also showed that strong religious believers and non-believers appeared to fear death less than those in between. Pew's research found that atheists were more likely to be younger than the overall population, which could perhaps go some way to explaining their relatively low levels of anxiety about death.

From: Le Miere, Jason. "Fear of Death is Lowest Among Atheists as Well as the Very Religious, Study Finds." *Newsweek*, 2017. newsweek.com/fear-death-atheists-religion-dying-afterlife-believers-575496

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Everything is Connected: An article in the Coastal Journal published a true story last year. In it, Steve Raymond talks about a friend, Ken, who had influenced his life positively when he was younger. They had become close friends. Years later Steve was working in a 60 bed ICU when he was seized with an urgent impulse to call Ken. Steve placed 25 to 30 calls in 30 minutes but got no answer.

The feeling passed and so Ken decided to call Steve after his shift. When he reached him, Ken said "I can't believe your calling me right now ... let me tell you what happened to me." Ken explained that he had shocked himself unconscious while working on an electrical outlet and had been taken to the ICU in Long Beach California. Ken said that while in the ER he had a vivid dream that Steve had come to help him. When the two accounted for their different time zones they found that Steve's urgent impulse to call matched up with the time of the accident.



From: Raymond, Steve; Wallace, Jill. "Everything is connected." *Coast Journal*. 2017. coastaljournal.com/2017/07/06/everything-is-connected/

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TV Mediums: Alli Bush writes "The major critiques of TV mediums (and mediums in general), is that it's all a scam. Because how can someone connect with a dead person? Where's the proof? But for me, I don't care. It makes me happy to see people find so much relief after making a good connection with a loved one. I don't believe it's a scam but that is my personal belief system. I am not here to say that everything on these shows is completely authentic and these mediums change the lives of everyone they meet. Of course, the networks only show the clips that are best for TV. But overall, if it makes people happy and isn't harmful, who cares because they bring people indescribable joy and closure.

From: Bush, Alli. "In Defense of the 'Long Island Medium' and Other TV Psychics." *Femestella*. 2017. femestella.com/long-island-medium-defense/

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Pixar's Coco is a Disney movie that takes its title from the name of a nearly-speechless grandmother living with Alzheimer's disease. It's set in a world where the dead exist in the afterlife, though only if they're remembered in the land of the living. Otherwise, they must endure 'the final death' of being forgotten. Some reviewers say that children will not be prepared for the emotional onslaught and that teens and adults probably won't be either. However, reviewers say that watching *Coco* yields deep feeling, genuine cathartic laughter and narratively-warranted tears. *Coco* conveys a sweet death-myth that encourages a thoughtful way of living (in short: tell the stories of those who came before).



From: movies.disney.com/coco. positively changes

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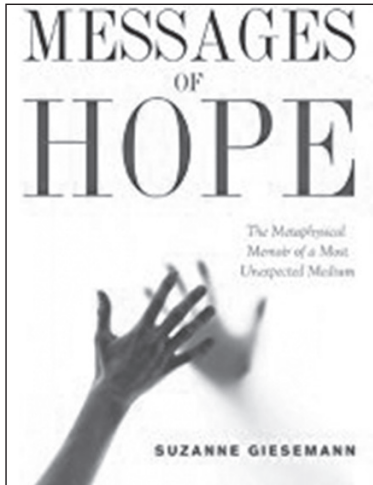
INTERVIEW

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Are you aware of what you are saying while in this altered state? Do some of the ideas expressed by Sanaya differ from your own?

I channel Sanaya from an altered state, but I am still somewhat aware of the concepts as they come through me, if not each word. Yes, they have definitely shared information that was contrary to my personal belief system, and I have subsequently changed my views based on their teaching.

By the way, it was several years after Sanaya instructed me to call them by that name that I learned Sanaya is an Arabic girl's name meaning "flash of lightning." This is amazingly ironic, considering a flash of lightning is what killed my stepdaughter Susan and the young man I wrote about in my book, *Wolf's Message*.



Psychologists and many parapsychologists would say it is all coming from your subconscious mind. How do you respond to them?

Sanaya has taught me that there is only one Mind projecting consciousness through multiple realities. I believe their words come from a super-conscious level of mind and are filtered through my subconscious mind. It is a cooperative experience and I have stopped asking if it is real or unreal. The only question that matters to Sanaya and to me is, "Is it useful?" Those who experience the energy and the words during these sessions are uplifted and they learn new perspectives, resulting in greater love and compassion in our world. Some have even been healed of physical ailments during the channeling sessions. I can't prove where this is coming from, but it is highly useful to the Whole, so I continue the practice.

I understand that clairvoyance/clairaudience and trance mediumship are two different types of phenomenon and that you experience both. Would you mind explaining the difference?

When I merge my awareness with that of a discarnate being in a mediumship sitting, I experience their presence through visual images (clairvoyance), hearing words or thoughts (clairaudience / claircognizance), as well as feeling their emotions and their

presence (clairsentience). In the deeper altered state from which I channel Sanaya, the words simply flow without time or need to interpret the information. I experience a seamless blending without images or any seeming separation, yet I most certainly feel the power of their presence.

I would like to point out that I no longer need to be in a deeply altered state to access Sanaya's guidance. These days I merely shift my focus with the intention of connecting with my Team and I instantly become aware of them. This kind of connection with guides is possible for anyone, since we are all expressions of Consciousness, just as our guides are. Once a person comes to know how it feels to be in a state of focused awareness, anyone can shift their focus and gain a higher perspective on our human issues. The reason I enjoy the channeling sessions so much more than simply checking in with them throughout the day is that once I enter into the deeper states of awareness, I can maintain that connection with Sanaya without the distractions of the physical world.

The "collective consciousness" calling itself Sanaya seems to be what was called a "group soul" with other mediums. Emperor and his band of 49 who communicated through William Stainton Moses a century ago immediately comes to mind, as does Jane Roberts's Seth. Do you think we are talking about the same thing?

I do. I have read and listened to the channeled materials of Jane Roberts and others such as Paul Selig and Esther Hicks. Just as a sensitive person can feel the energy or level of consciousness of an author when we read books written by contemporary authors, the channeled works of these well-known channelers all have a similar "energy" or feel to me.

As I understand it, the more advanced spirits have more difficulty in communicating than lower-level spirits because of the frequency differences. Emperor, for example, is said to have relayed messages through Rector and other more intermediate level spirits. Do you have any idea how that works with Sanaya?

This is a new concept for me, and Sanaya has never indicated there was a challenge. I don't know the answer, which presents an excellent opportunity to simply ask Sanaya! Their answer: "We are well familiar with working through our earthly channel. It has been a lengthy process in your earth-time preparing the physical body of the medium to handle the higher vibrations – indeed years of "ramping up" the vibrations, you might say. But it presents no challenge for us, as we are well familiar with the process of impressing our thought-vibrations upon those whose inner light indicates they are good conduits for sharing the messages of higher

consciousness that we bring.”

The basic messages coming from Sanaya seem to be about love and forgiveness. How much is there to say about those subjects? Is what “they” are now saying different than what they said seven or eight years ago?

There is no change at all in their teaching. In fact, they have told us many times that there is nothing new under the sun in this regard and that we cannot hear these messages of love and the soul’s evolution too often. All we have to do is read the headlines each day to see that there is still plenty of learning to be had in this Earth School.

Do you ever sense that devious “earthbound” spirits are trying to interfere with the communication?

I have no experience with this phenomenon. In fact, I don’t believe that spirits get “stuck” here. In my understanding, some choose to hang around for specific reasons, but like us, they can make free will choices to move on or not. My current book project is the biography of British medium Mavis Pittilla. She has some great stories about spirits making all kinds of racket here not because they were “stuck” nor to be mischievous, but to draw attention to a potential danger.

The powerful presence I and those who attend the sessions with Sanaya feel is one of pure love. Anything less than that would be noticed immediately. I always instruct people who listen to Sanaya’s words to test them in their heart. If they don’t resonate, set them to the side.

Given all the chaos and turmoil in the world today, do you think we are making any progress in overcoming our materialistic and hedonistic ways?

I believe that ever so slowly, we are making progress. Sanaya repeatedly tells us not to be discouraged. They point out that we have progressed from the Dark Ages to our current era, which they jokingly refer to as the “Dim Ages.” In the grand scheme of things, this is an improvement, but we have a long way to go until the majority of humans understand that we are here to learn to extend not fear, anger, and hatred, but love.

Mainstream psychology is mystified as to the motivation of the Las Vegas shooter and the Austin bomber. Of course, they don’t recognize negative spirit influence, but what are your thoughts on that?

I’ve read about “negative spirit influence,” and some of it is highly credible, but I make a deliberate and conscious choice to give no power to it. Belief is a very powerful force, so I choose to focus only on the light and to be that light. In my understanding, most who commit atrocities are acting from ignorance of the fact that we are that light. If, in fact, negative

spirit influences are acting on one’s consciousness, then our own strong inner light would be a powerful way of remaining free of any negative influence. Thankfully, there are specialists who can help those who do not realize how powerful their light can be.

Do you have a preference between channeling Sanaya and mental mediumship?

I love them both. Thanks to the Internet, channeling Sanaya helps us to send ripples to a large number of people around the world, but there is nothing like being one-on-one with someone in my private sittings and providing them with evidence that their loved ones who have passed are right there with us. The kind of verifiable information that those in spirit are able to get through in those sessions is wondrous and can be incredibly healing. I’ve seen people’s grief be transformed in one hour when family members go from despair to the stunning awareness their loved ones live on across the veil.

You’ve come a long way since our interview in 2010. You now lead webinars and classes and host an online radio show on Unity FM with the same name as your memoir, Messages of Hope (see www.SuzanneGiesemann.com/radioshow) Did you foresee any of this when you wrote your first book about mediumship?

I truly did not, and it’s the greatest honor I can imagine to serve in this way. When I interviewed Anne Gehman for *The Priest and the Medium*, I didn’t have any idea that I would one day be a medium myself. Because my waiting list for readings is over three years long now, I offer classes, workshops, webinars, online courses, and CDs to help others connect across the veil themselves. I work harder these days than I ever did in my Navy career, even when I was assigned to the Pentagon working what my husband calls “half days” (6 AM to 6 PM) as aide to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs! Honestly, though, I wouldn’t change a thing. I have the most supportive husband in the world, and I love my life with Ty and our two longhaired dachshunds.

What does the future hold?

I have no idea! I used to be a big goal setter and I had to have everything planned out in great detail, but Sanaya has taught me how much better things turn out when we allow ourselves to be guided moment to moment by Higher Consciousness. These days, I’m very happy to simply follow orders from Spirit. Of course, I still exercise my free will, but it’s a very peaceful, freeing way to live once you stop striving and allow yourself to be guided. I want to help as many people as possible to know the peace and joy that come from awakening to the fact that we are never alone and that what connects us all is love.

Intriguing Evidence From the Past

Scientific Evidence of Spirits

When the militant skeptics arrogantly claim that there is no scientific evidence for a spirit world, they conveniently forget about the “Paraffin Hands Case,” considered one of the most convincing scientific experiments in the annals of psychical research, one offering objective evidence of spirit life. The experiments were carried out in November and December 1920 by two highly respected scientists, Charles Richet and Gustave Geley, with Polish medium Franek Kluski. Richet and Geley succeeded in having “entities” – a more scientifically proper name for spirits – dip their hands and feet into some paraffin so that molds could be made of their body parts.

Kluski was a 50-year-old writer and poet who had discovered his mediumistic ability just 18 months earlier. There were 14 experiments, all but one carried out in Geley’s Paris laboratory. Other scientists, including Camille Flammarion, a world-renowned astronomer, sat in on one or more of the experiments.

Winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize in medicine for his research on anaphylaxis, the sensitivity of the body to alien protein, Richet was a physiologist, chemist, bacteriologist, pathologist, psychologist, aviation pioneer, poet, novelist, editor, author, and psychical researcher. He held doctorates in both medicine and science, serving as professor of physiology at the medical school of the University of Paris for 38 years.

A Laureate of the French Academy of Medicine, Geley had gained some fame for his research in anesthesia and for new methods of treating smallpox. In 1918, he accepted the directorship of the International Metaphysical Institute (*Institut Metapsychique International*) in Paris. The primary objective of the Institute was to investigate paranormal phenomena, especially mediumship, under strict scientific controls and conditions.

The protocol called for the medium to be thoroughly searched before being admitted to the laboratory and for the doors of the laboratory to be

locked from the inside at all times. With some mediums, Geley went so far as to require gynecological and rectal examinations to rule out hidden objects. Because the ectoplasm produced by mediums and later reabsorbed by them is sensitive to white light, red lights were used, permitting some visibility, although it was inadequate for photography, and there was concern that flash photography would negatively affect the ectoplasm flowing from the medium and thereby injure the medium.

Some years earlier, during the 1870s, Richet scoffed at the reports of renowned British chemist William

Crookes, a pioneer in X-ray technology and the discoverer of the element thallium, that he had repeatedly observed spirit materializations with the medium Florence Cook. But after his own investigation of mediums began during the 1880s, Richet changed his position. “I avow with shame that I was among the willfully blind,” he wrote in dedicating his 1923 book, *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, to Crookes.

Richet, Geley and other researchers concluded that the substance flowing from the medium, earlier named ectoplasm by Richet, takes on different forms. Sometimes it is thick and milky looking and at other times vaporous and invisible. Kluski’s was of the latter type. “This ectoplasmic formation at the expense of the physiological organism of the medium is now beyond all dispute,” Richet proclaimed. “It is prodigiously strange, prodigiously unusual, and it would seem so unlikely as to be incredible; but we must give in to the facts.”

While there were a few mediums in the world strong enough or developed enough to produce ectoplasm which would result in full body materializations, Kluski apparently was not one of them. Faces, arms, and hands were usually observed with him. According to Geley, the experiments would



Kluski

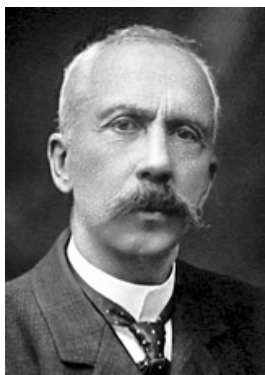


begin with a strong odor of ozone. "Then, in weak light, slightly phosphorescent vapor floats around the medium, especially above his head, like light smoke, and in it there are gleams like foci of condensation," he explained.

Geley and Richet had heard of experiments involving paraffin molds taking place in the United States and England, but those experiments were said to be inconclusive due to limited controls, and so they decided to replicate the earlier experiments under strictly controlled conditions. "The procedure is to set a bowl containing paraffin wax, kept at a melting point by being floated on warm water, near the medium," Geley explained. "The materialized 'entity' is asked to plunge a hand, foot, or even part of a face into the paraffin several times. A closely fitting envelope is thus formed, which sets at once in air or by being dipped into another bowl of cold water. This envelope or 'glove' is then freed by dematerialization of the member. Plaster can be poured at leisure into the glove, thus giving a perfect cast of the hand."

As Geley and Richet came to understand it, the fact that many of the materialized forms were incomplete or fragmentary, sometimes just two-dimensional, occasionally grotesque in appearance, did not suggest fraud, as many skeptics assumed. Rather, they were simply indications that the medium was not developed enough for the entities to produce complete forms. In fact, the incomplete manifestations seemed to run contrary to any fraud explanation as it was deemed highly unlikely that a charlatan would have expected anyone to believe that such odd manifestations were real in the first place.

To completely rule out any sleight of hand by Kluski, Richet held one of Kluski's hands while Geley held the other during the later experiments. In their experiment of November 15, the hand of a child was produced in the paraffin. In a later experiment, on December 27, Geley and Richet added some bluish coloring matter to the paraffin. "This was done secretly, to be an absolute proof that the molds were made on the spot and not brought ready-made into the laboratory by Franek or any other person and



Richet



passed off on us by legerdemain," Geley explained further noting that two very good hand molds were obtained, both with a blue tinge to them.

In all, they obtained nine molds, of which seven were of hands, one of a foot, and one of a mouth and chin. But the entities did not identify themselves or give any indication as to whom they might have been when alive. Geley observed that there was a negative correlation between communication and materialization. That is, when they tried to communicate, there was no power to carry out the materialization, or when they materialized there was no power for communication.

Geley had the hand molds examined by a criminologist to rule out any similarity to Kluski's hands. "The answer can scarcely leave room for doubt," Geley concluded. "They present all the characters of human members – perfect form, lines of the hand, nails, crinkles of the skin, marks of bony protuberances, tendons, and sometimes even the small veins on the back of the hands. Nothing is wanting. We have shown these casts to artists, painters, sculptors, and molders, and to many medical men. The verdict of all has been unanimous – they are molds of human hands." Geley also noted that traces of muscular contraction indicate that the hands were "alive."

So, if not fraud or deception on the part of Kluski, what exactly were those "entities" or "invisible collaborators"? The debunkers can find some solace in the fact that Richet could not bring himself to declare a belief in spirits as he felt it was unscientific. "To ask a physician, a physicist, or a chemist to admit that a form that has a circulation of blood, warmth, and muscles, that exhales carbonic acid, has weight, speaks, and thinks, can issue from a human body is to ask of him an intellectual effort that is really painful," he expressed his frustration. However, Richet was later quoted as saying that the spirit hypothesis "explains the facts more easily."

Before he was killed in a plane crash in 1924, Geley declared his belief in spirits and the survival of consciousness in a scientific way. "It should be beyond doubt that the Self both pre-exists, and that it survives the grouping which it directs during one earth-life," he wrote, "that it more particularly survives its lower objectification during this life. This may at least be admitted, if not as a mathematical certainty, at least as a high probability."

How much more scientific can it get?

– MET



Geley



Spectral Evidence, by N. Riley Heagerty, Tempestina Teapot Books (Volume I), New York, 2017, 137 pages

This book sets forth some of the most amazing and intriguing phenomena in the annals of mediumship, including that of the Eddy family, the Davenport brothers, Emily French, Cora Richmond, George Valiantine, Ethel Post Parrish, and Elizabeth Blake.

If anyone knows more about mediumship and its history than Riley Heagerty, I have yet to meet him or her. The intriguing stories in this book, Heagerty's fourth, sometimes conflict with religious dogma and doctrine, usually defy scientific laws, and most always exceed the boggle threshold of rational people, the result being that they have been dismissed at various web sites as fraud. However, extensive research by credible scientists and scholars strongly suggests the reality of such phenomena – a reality that points to a spirit world and occasional contact with deceased relatives and friends.

The mediumship of Cora Richmond certainly has to be one of the most fascinating. Beginning at age 11, Cora (1840-1923) would go into trance and talk about things far beyond her education, experience, exposure, and maturity. As a teenager, she toured the United States, giving lectures on social, political, economic, and religious matters, even extending to the emancipation of slaves. In 1874, at age 34, she toured the United Kingdom, lecturing to standing-room only crowds. Generally, the subject matter would be given to her on the stage and she would then talk for an hour or so without hesitation, offering many profound thoughts. Among her talks were "The Origin of Man," and "The Comparative Influence of Science and Morality on the Rise and Progress of Nations."

Heagerty offers the complete transcript of a talk she gave to the Philosophical Society of Chicago on March 6, 1886. The chairman of the group asked her to speak on "the human mind, its origin, nature and destiny..." An extract from her 45-minute discourse: "This mental process, which you denominate reason, is not the only mental process. Whatever consciousness there is in the human organism that recognizes its own existence, whatever

power there is that is capable of comprising, judging, aspiring or in any way expressing itself, that is mind. And when the mind has sufficiently established itself in the human organism by the mature years of that organism, then whatever spiritual power constitutes the primal, *a priori* impetus of that life begins to be expressed, and the whole range of the individual mind, limited as said before by organic processes, by what you term accident of birth, by the limitations of the senses, by certain hereditary tendencies, still must express the intention of the spirit...."

Heagerty begins the chapter on the Eddy family by saying that it is the most compelling story of physical mediumship that he has encountered and adding that William Eddy is most likely the greatest materialization medium of the 19th century.

Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, a retired U. S. Army officer, lawyer, and co-founder of the Theosophical Society, reported that he observed more than 400 spirits materialize from William's cabinet.

If William Eddy was the greatest materialization medium of the 19th century, Ethel Post Parrish may have been the greatest of the 20th century. She served at Camp Silver Belle in Ephrata, Pennsylvania during the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. It was reported that on August 25, 1945, 32 people observed over 50 manifestations of deceased loved ones.

Emily French, of Buffalo, New York, has to rank among the best direct-voice mediums ever. She was the subject of seven books authored by Edward C. Randall, a reputable Buffalo lawyer, who had more than 700 sittings with her over some 20 years. Heagerty draws from a sitting Randall had with French in 1900. While communicating with a soldier who died in the battle of Gettysburg, Randall asked the spirit communicator about his awakening on the other side. "...I had no conception of a hereafter, for with all of my religious teaching I had no idea of what or where the future life might be," he responded. "Nor was I at all sure there was one; so you can imagine how startled I was to awake as from a deep sleep; bewildered I got to my feet, and looked down and saw my body among others on the ground ... Then many of us stood up, and like me seemed to emerge from their physical bodies, for their old forms still lay upon the field..."

There are 15 different stories in this book, each one of them no doubt challenging the boggle threshold of most readers.

– Michael Tymn



Becoming Supernatural: How Common People are Doing the Uncommon, by Dr. Joe Dispenza, Hay House Publishers, India, 2017, 238 pages

Using solid-rock evidence, Joe Dispenza shows how it is possible to rewrite one's DNA as he skillfully guides readers to a new connection with the untapped part of our mind-body connection. He uses various meditations to harmonize the neurons in our brain and the sensory neuritis in our heart along with the chemistry in our body. This configuration produces a quantum mental/emotional state that minimizes our negative and/or traumatic past programming. It allows a higher frequency to develop thus shifting our awareness from our limited and often painfully stuck perception into the quantum field of potential. This could bring about healing of both body and mind/emotions and even change spiritual concepts and produce mystical revelations.

Dispenza draws on case studies of participants at his retreat and conferences who have made major changes after successfully reaching their quantum level of frequency through specific meditations (which are included in the book). In addition, he relates his own personal experiences describing these concepts and procedures.

Many of these participants had challenging health conditions due to trauma (PTSD). Results of various research show that stress triggers the genes producing hormones which could result in serious health issues. "It is the environment that signals the gene's expression on and off instead of the other way around. The body doesn't know the difference between an emotion created by an experience you are having in the outside environment and an emotion you are creating internally. So when you embrace the elevated emotions and think thoughts that were greater than the self-limiting ones that kept you stuck in the past, your body begins to prepare chemically for the future (because it thinks that the future is already happening now). Therefore, through repeated specific meditation the body thinks that healing or any condition in your environment has already taken place. Where you put your attention is where your energy goes."

Not only do physical healings occur, many participants report results of feeling more loving and compassionate, more evolved and conscious, more exuberant and more supernatural. This has been validated by brain scans and other brain research



methods. In order to reach this fifth dimension known as the quantum or unified field it is necessary to be fully present in the moment. This appears to actually rewire the brain's nerve cells and network, affecting the entire nervous system throughout the body, its chemicals, emotions, brain waves and energy to bring about the desired goal.

It is worth the time and practice required to develop this skill since it can also increase the coherence between the heart and the brain. Dispenza explains heart coherence as the "heart functions in the same organized way as when we are truly present, when we can sustain higher emotional states and when we feel safe enough to open up to possibilities. The brain thinks but the heart knows."

One chapter is devoted to the quantum world (fifth dimension) as an "invisible field of energy and information that exists beyond this three dimensional realm of space and time. We can arrive in this dimension by taking our attention off the ordinary things of life such as our bodies, our identities, things we possess and people and places we know that we have formed through life. When you are able to bring your awareness to this quantum dimension of possibilities, you can match your energy to the frequency to any potential in the quantum field that exists there: Actually, all potential futures exist there."

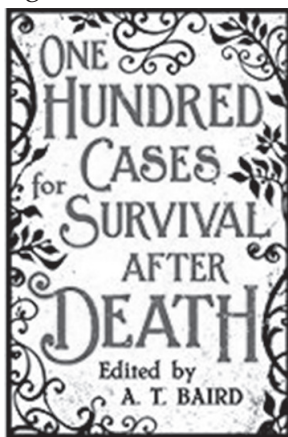
Mystical quantum physicist David Bohm called the realm of the quantum the implicate order where everything is connected and the explicit order the material realm of separation. Thus, Dispenza writes when you surrender your awareness to the field of oneness there is no separation or division at this level of frequency and energy that could be called love or wholeness. Liberally woven throughout the book are charts that illustrate the author's concepts making them more understandable and applicable. Especially interesting and validating are 25 pages of colored graphs showing electronically how the brains of conference participants changed during meditations. One chapter explores the pineal gland's amazing important role in how the brain processes and regulated the mind as well as the body.

Dispenza writes that each cell in our bodies expresses an actual light field that contributes to and carries information to the vital quantum field. Therefore we are literally beings of light. "Every time we meditate as a global community, we're casting a larger stronger coherent wave of love and altruism around the world. If we do this enough times, we should be able to not only measure the changes in energy and frequency around the world, but measure our efforts by the positive changes in the events that take place in our future."

— Glenda Hawley, Ph.D.

One Hundred Cases for Survival After Death, edited by A. T. Baird, White Crow Books, UK, 2018, 217 pages

The closed-minded “know-nothings” haughtily proclaim that there is no evidence for survival. When confronted with various stories strongly suggesting survival, such as those in this book, they claim with great hubris that it is all fraud, delusion, hallucination, wishful-thinking, anecdotal, not scientific, whatever. However, the open-minded skeptic might very well have second thoughts about survival if he or she is willing to set aside all biases and ego concerns. No single case among the 100 offered in this book may convince the person that survival is a fact, but as Sir Oliver Lodge, a renowned physicist, once said, it is the cumulative evidence that provides conviction.



This book is a republication of a 1944 book and has 11 categories – dreams, haunted houses, apparitions, deathbed visions, automatic writing, trance phenomena, cross-correspondences, book tests, proxy sittings, direct-voice phenomena, and materialization. To me, the first two categories are the weakest and should have been eliminated or saved for last. It might be noted that editor Alex Baird followed this book with another one, *Case Book for Survival*, in which he offered an additional 100 cases.

One of the more interesting and credible cases in the apparition category was reported by Horace G. Byers, Ph.D., LL.D., a professor at the University of Washington. He said that his wife suddenly sat up in bed at 3 a.m. on June 3, 1904, crying out “Grandmother.” She said that her grandmother had stood by the side of the bed, looking intently at her and seemingly trying to tell her something. The following afternoon a telegram arrived informing them that the grandmother had died the previous night. The grandmother was not known to be near death.

Dr. E. H. Plumtree, the Dean of Wells, reported a case in which a woman was dying, having been in a state of almost complete unconsciousness for some days. A short time before her death, she awakened enough to say, “There they are all of them – William, Elizabeth, Emma and Anne.” After a pause, she added, “And Priscilla too.” Plumtree explained that William was a son who had died in infancy, while

Priscilla had died two days earlier, a fact unknown to the dying woman.

Under the category of automatic writing, there is “The Pearl Tie-Pin Case,” involving two of the most famous mediums of yesteryear, Hester Travers-Smith and Geraldine Cummins, although Cummins, who had not yet then developed as a medium, is referred to as Miss C. Cummins, sitting with Travers-Smith, heard from her cousin, who had been killed in a battle in France a month earlier. He asked Cummins to tell his mother to give his pearl tie-pin to the girl he had intended to marry, both her first and last name being spelled out. Neither Cummins nor her cousin’s family members were aware of the young woman or the engagement. However, when the War Office forwarded his effects, the pearl tie-pin was there as was his will with his fiancée’s full name given, just as it came through from Travers-Smith.

Among the trance phenomena cases are several with the famous Boston medium Leonora Piper. One of the more interesting cases was reported by Professor Herbert Nichols, of Harvard University. Although highly skeptical in the beginning, Nichols’s attitude changed as he received names, places, and events from his past over a 45-minute period. The most startling piece of information had to do with a ring his deceased mother gave him many years earlier and which he had lost. The ring was engraved with a “peculiar” word, which was spelled out by Piper’s hand. “...that she is no fraud, and that she is the greatest marvel I have ever met, I am now convinced,” Nichols is quoted from a letter he sent to Professor William James.

It is somewhat unusual for a spirit unknown to anyone present to communicate, but that was the case on February 10, 1933, when a spirit identifying herself as Bessy Manning communicated through the direct-voice mediumship of Estelle Roberts. Bessy apparently wanted her mother to know that she was still with her, even though she had died the previous Easter. She gave her mother’s address, 14 Canterbury St. Blackburn. Journalist Maurice Barbanell followed up and found the mother at that very address and arranged for her to sit with Roberts and hear directly from Bessy. “I heard my own daughter speaking, in the same old loving way and with the self-same peculiarities of speech,” Barbanell quoted the mother. “She spoke of incidents that I know for a positive fact no other person could know.”

One can pick holes in all of these cases, but when considering 200 cases as reported by Baird in his two books, even the most militant skeptic, if honest to himself, must pause and wonder if there might not be something to it all.

– Michael Tymn

Never Parted: A Brother's Loving Teachings from the Afterlife, by Terri Lynn Segal, Amazon Digital Service, 2018, 208 pages

Soon after her brother, Jeff, aka "Duffy," transitioned to the spirit world on July 24, 2014, author Terri Lynn Segal began experiencing extraordinary things, including dream visitations, synchronicities, energy sensations, premonitions, out-of-body excursions, visions, automatic writing, and electronic voice messages.

Duffy, a 50-year-old lawyer who struggled with bipolar disorder and a drug problem, took his own life, apparently unable to deal with the trauma related to a divorce.

Academy members may have read about some of Segal's experiences in the May 2015 and November 2017 issues of the organization's journal. Her book expands on those experiences, providing a much more complete story. She notes in the book that she attended the Academy's conference during September of 2015 and found the presenters diverse and intriguing. She was especially impressed by a mother who had not been a believer in survival before her son passed but became a believer after she learned to use a pendulum and an alpha numeric board to communicate with him.

"As a therapist, I am keenly aware of what it could mean to be feeling things that have no clear scientific explanation," Segal writes, admitting that she wondered if she were having some form of "grief psychosis," especially since Duffy was more than just a brother. He was, she says, "as close to an unconditional love as I have ever known." However, after carefully and continually examining her experiences she concluded that she was not suffering from a wild imagination or hallucinations and that the communication with Duffy was a result of a special affinity or harmony that existed between the two.

Segal kept a diary of significant experiences relating to Duffy and draws from many of them in the book. A May 25, 2015 entry states she had a reading with a medium the prior day, Duffy's birthday. She first heard from some person she could not identify, then from an uncle, her father, her stepfather, and, much to her surprise, her partner's parents. Her father accurately gave her childhood nickname, one not used in many years. After 30 minutes or so,



Duffy, finally communicated, and it was said that he was with her father and her uncle. Other veridical facts were related before Duffy actually spoke and told his sister that he went quietly to the other side and that he was now happy.

It was on March 31, 2015 that Segal decided to give automatic writing a try. "I put myself in a relaxed state and guided myself through a journey to connect with Duffy and then to automatically write his answers to my questions," she explains, going on to offer much of what Duffy had to say.

In the automatic writing, Duffy explained the despair that made him take his own life. "I was my father's son," he wrote through his sister's hand. "So much of what I did, I did for external rewards. I told myself it was for my own personal best, but what I came to realize at the end of my life is that my own personal best somehow got replaced by always trying to conform to others' expectations. I became excellent at being a chameleon. This did not happen overnight. It was insidious and ultimately expedited my rise in income and status."

Chapter 10 sets forth a number of questions Segal put to Duffy and his answers. One question asks about friends he might have on that side. "Well we have groups, rather than friends," he replied. "Groups of like or equal-minded souls. We have a purpose together – to create, grow, learn and expand." In another question, she asked if Duffy can hear her thoughts. "I can hear your thoughts because the connection of everything in the universe is thought," Duffy replied. "Actually, I am closer than a thought. I feel your intent to think of me – I already know it. We know intent and thoughts just 'are'."

Duffy stressed that he is *not dead*. "I am alive in another realm. I have a life here with purpose and meaning. Eternity is a way of saying life goes on and in any way one needs. All it takes is imagining."

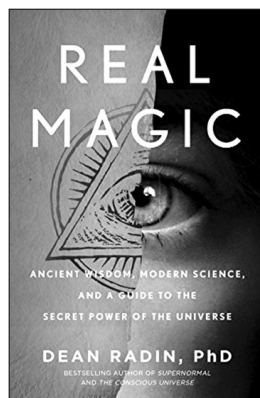
If this book had been published 40 years ago, I would have given a copy to my aunt, whose son took his own life at about age 20. She accepted the teachings of the Catholic Church that her son would spend eternity in hell, a belief that resulted in her living the rest of her life in a state of melancholy. While by no means condoning suicide, this book and a number of others involving suicide victims suggest that the person does not immediately escape from his or her despair and that suicide is never a solution, but it is something that can be dealt with on the Other Side and eventually overcome there.

"My journey through grief has made me a much more confident and peaceful person," Segal ends the book. "I believe without a doubt that my relationship with Duffy continues to this day."

– Michael Tymn

Real Magic: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Science, and a Guide to the Secret Power of the Universe, by Dean Radin, Ph.D., Harmony Books, NY, 2018, 257 pages

This book will be reviewed in the next issue, but the advance publicity suggests it is one that may very well interest Academy members. As Radin, chief scientist at the Institute of Noetic Science (IONS), explains in the first chapter, the book is about magic, but “not the fictional magic of Harry Potter, the feigned magic of Harry Houdini, or the fraudulent magic of con artists, or any other elaborations of artistic license and special effects.” It’s about *real* magic.



Radin goes on to explain that the book involves mental influences of the physical world, perceptions of events distant in space or time, and interactions with nonphysical entities, the latter including spirit communication.

Positive editorial reviews are offered at Amazon.com by Brian Josephson, Nobel Laureate in Physics, Charles T. Tart, emeritus professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis; Stanley Krippner, professor of psychology at Saybrook University, popular author Larry Dossey, M.D., and a number of other esteemed scientists and scholars.

— MET

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Academy Conference

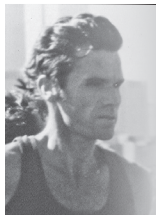
Due to administrative changes and the seating of new officers, the Academy’s annual conference, “Aspects of Consciousness” is just now in the planning stages. Tentatively, the plan is to hold the conference in Raleigh, NC, in conjunction with the 45th anniversary of the Spiritual Frontier Fellowship of North Carolina, from Thursday evening, the 4th of October, to Saturday evening, the 6th. We are arranging workshops and will be putting out a “Call for Papers” shortly. Details of the conference will be available and sent to members with the summer issue of *The Journal for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies*.

— James Beichler

Letter to the Editor

I know Rick Darby can not be compared to a skeptic of the paranormal who either refuses to examine facts with an open mind or engages in unfounded and irrational critiques, but his lack of knowledge regarding global warming/ climate change/ climate disruption surprised me. (Ref: Reflecting Light column, April issue) For many years, the fossil fuel industry, through their own research, has known the earth was heating up due to fossil fuel greenhouse gases {carbon dioxide, methane, nitrogen oxide, etc.}. They were concerned about their bottom line and just like the tobacco industry, they challenged sound science with their own quasi-scientists for hire. First they denied global warming existed, then when that became evident, they questioned the causes. They did this to promote doubt and uncertainty in the public mind, and they did it through organizations like the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, the Charles Koch Fund, and the American Legislative Exchange Council, organizations funded by the fossil fuel industry barons (Koch Brothers, Adelson, etc.) The film *Merchants of Doubt* will leave no doubt in how *The Rule of Gold* (rather than the Golden Rule) distorts reality and truth. Also we would all benefit from seeing the film *Call to Life* and reading Richard Leakey’s book *The 6th Extinction*. The earth’s 6th extinction is underway and some scientists are saying we could lose up to 1/2 of our know species (10 million) by the year 2050. And since we are all interconnected and in some ways interdependent, this should be a wake up call.

— Peter R. Mitchell



Practicing Death

To practice death is to practice freedom — Michel de Montaigne

Michael Tymn



Minding the Gap between Heaven and Hell

A recent survey concerning various beliefs by Canadians revealed that only 42 percent of the respondents believe in hell, although 63 percent believe in heaven and 66 percent believe in life after death. About the same time this survey was released, the mainstream media reported that Pope Francis supposedly told Eugenio Scalfari, an Italian newspaper publisher, that hell doesn't exist. There is controversy as to whether that is what the pope actually said.

If I had been part of such a survey as that conducted in Canada, I wouldn't know how to answer the question about hell unless they defined hell. If they meant the hell of orthodox religions — one of fire and brimstone in which sinners go for eternity — I would definitely give a "no" to it. If, however, they were referring to a "fire of the mind," something akin to a nightmare, for a limited period of time, however time plays out in that realm, I would respond with a "yes."

The dichotomous heaven and hell of orthodox religion is, I believe, the single biggest obstacle to the belief in life after death, as it is totally inconsistent with a fair, just, and compassionate God, while implying a very cruel, biased and vindictive one. The religious message, though varying among denominations, is that a person will spend eternity in hell if he or she doesn't choose the right savior, or if he doesn't repent in a very timely manner. A person can lead a very virtuous life, but if he worshipped the wrong savior or committed a grievous sin just before his death, with no opportunity to repent, his fate in hell is sealed. There is nothing between being *righteous* or *wicked*, although the Catholic Church more or less recognizes something to this effect in purgatory.

My guess is that the pope agrees with all that, but he doesn't know how to overturn 2000 years of dogma. It would mean saying that all the "infallible" popes before him were actually fallible, and would undermine the authority of the Church.

Surprisingly, a March 31 release by *The Tablet*, the International Catholic News Weekly, states that the pope "is heavily influenced by a novel featuring the Antichrist..." which confirms the existence



Benson

of hell.

Wow! A novel influences the pope's thinking. That piece of fiction, *Lord of the World*, was written by Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, the son of a former Archbishop of Canterbury. Benson was an Anglican vicar who created quite a stir when he converted to Roman Catholicism in 1903. His novel was published in 1907.

I wonder if the pope knows the rest of the story, that involving Anthony Borgia, a British medium, who began recording messages from Benson, who died in 1914. In a 1909 book, *The Necromancers*, Benson gave a distorted views of spirit communication. As Borgia explains it, Benson found that the views he had expressed in that book were substantially incorrect and he came to Borgia to set the record straight.

"The whole fantastic doctrine of hell-fire — a fire which burns but never consumes — is one of the most outrageously stupid and ignorant doctrines that has ever been invented by equally stupid and ignorant churchmen," Benson communicated through Borgia, describing the lower realms as nothing but a cold, dank atmosphere, its inhabitants seemingly listless and lost in the darkness. They are not being punished by the God they mocked, he reported, but rather they are punishing themselves.

It is a message that has been repeated over and over again in spirit communication since Emanuel Swedenborg and continuing through respected mediums like Gladys Osborne Leonard and Edgar Cayce. Cayce said that in the lower realms he saw "forms" that were floundering or lost and seeking the light. As the light grew stronger and stronger, he arrived at a place where individuals appeared much as they do today.

In John 14:2, Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you." The usual orthodox interpretation of that is that Jesus was referring only to heaven. But modern revelation suggests that he was referring to the whole spectrum of the afterlife, from the lowest to the highest realms. Call them hell and heaven if you will, but consider that there is much in between those two extremes.

The pope needs to keep reading and to consider the volumes of revelation that have come to us since Swedenborg about a much more sensible and just afterlife. Rational people won't return to the pews until they get something that makes sense.



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The mission of The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc. is to discern, develop and disseminate knowledge of how consciousness studies and paranormal phenomena may relate to and enhance the development of the human spirit.

Ponder of This

"Fear, fright, distrust, doubt and all other forms of inward opposition exert upon the odic current an effect as unfavorable as that produced by mental tension. Whoever, harboring such feelings, takes part in a spiritistic meeting, not only fails to release an odic force himself, but interrupts the current liberated by others. Hence mediums can tell at once when there is someone present who acts like an extraneous, obstructive body, and are justified in demanding the exclusion of such a person until he has adopted a different mental attitude.

"Whenever, therefore, at spiritistic gatherings, there is a lack of harmony of thought and feeling, there can be no homogenous odic current, and the successful outcome of the meeting becomes problematic, if not indeed impossible.

"This explains why scientific committees which experiment with mediums often meet with little or no success. The mediums, who as we know, are the sources of power for the manifestations of spirit beings, feel discouraged and nervous when surrounded by an atmosphere of distrust. They realize all the while that their investigators consider them capable of committing fraud and that they have no faith in the thing itself. Sensations of this kind are bound to check the release of energy on the part of the medium, if not to prevent it altogether.

"That is a law of Nature, and, incidentally, it is the same law as that which causes the blood to forsake the cheeks of a person seized with fear, and to rush to his inner organs, making him turn pale. What happens is, that the person's odic force retreats inward draws the blood to his heart.

"How unjustly do your scientists therefore so often judge of a medium's failure to meet their tests! They would do better to consider the obstacles placed in the way of mediums as sources of power for the spirit world, more particularly by the scientists themselves, who need only remove these obstacles in order to obtain a satisfactory demonstration of the ability of spirits to make themselves manifest.

"It is true that the *good* spirit-world very rarely engages in communications which do not deal exclusively with the purposes of good, but which serve merely to satisfy scientific inquiry, if not, indeed, sheer curiosity. The latter is the province in which the *low* spirit-world is especially active and in which, unfortunately it only too often causes a great deal of harm."

Ref: *Communication with The Spirit World of God: Personal Experiences of a Catholic Priest*, by Johannes Greber (communicated to Greber through a trance medium, page 130)